

VISN 5 MIRECC Research Abstract

Increasing Treatment Attendance among Patients with Dual Diagnosis

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Patients with severe mental illness (SMI) show alarmingly high rates of substance use disorders. Dual diagnosis has a profound impact on the course and severity of both mental illness and substance use disorders, as well as on almost every area of patient functioning and clinical care. Although there is a great need to treat substance abuse in dual diagnosis patients, treatment attendance and adherence is considerably affected by dual diagnosis. A crucial problem in treating patients with dual diagnosis is poor attendance at treatment. Strategies that are most often used to engage these patients in treatment are inflexible and authoritative, and have met with little success. The present study will examine the impact of a brief intervention added to a standard clinical intake on treatment attendance among patients with dual diagnosis. The goal is to study a method of increasing attendance among dually diagnosed patients with severe mental illness.